

Green Team teaches recycling at Harry Hurst Middle School in Destrehan

Harry Hurst Middle School in Destrehan is aware of all things environmental. Home of the award-winning LaBranche Wetland Watchers Service learning project, Hurst Middle School is currently promoting their Green Team project. Each day during lunch you can find a group of students who call themselves “the Green Team” scurrying around campus emptying recycling bins full of materials. The team making a difference by reducing the amount of trash that ends up in our landfills.

The Green Team has partnered with Phoenix Recycling to engage the whole school community in recycling as a part of transforming the school campus into a green community. The team’s first meeting and training session took place on Sept. 10, which also commenced their campus curbside recycling project. The project involves students picking up materials from class that have been placed in the hallway at the beginning of lunch. To date, the school has collected approximately 5,722 gallons of material. All of this was waste generated on a daily basis on the school campus that will be reused instead of going into a landfill.

Comprised of approximately 40 students, the Green Team has become the voice of change and has helped to jumpstart the school’s recycling program. On a daily basis, team members instruct their peers as well as the faculty and staff as to what should be recycled and what is considered regular waste. Seventh grade science teacher Julie Rexford, along with team mentors Karen Nagele and Dawn Lotshaw, help guide the students on their tasks. Meeting once a week for about an hour, the team typically makes posters, researches information on recycling, and cleans and sorts recycling bins. A big part of the Green Team’s mission is to encourage other students and staff to recycle in the classroom as well as in other locations such as the cafeteria, gym and library. They also create posters and signage to hang around the school as reminders for everyone to recycle. The team also hangs signs on light switches to remind everyone to turn off the lights when leaving a room unoccupied.

In addition to the recycling program, students are also brainstorming additional ways to promote



Middle School Students from Harry Hurst Middle School in Destrehan are part of the Green Team promoting recycling in their school and community.

environmental awareness. Students in the Talented Drama program have written and produced a video to promote recycling that will be used to help further educate their fellow students. The organization is also researching additional ideas that can be incorporated in the coming months that will further move the entire school community toward being green. The group is also looking at the possibility of creating a coloring book and comic book to teach environmental issues to students in lower grades. With some assistance from corporate sponsors, the group is applying for grants to start a composting program on campus and to possibly place solar panels on school buildings.



HH Green Team - Members of the Harry Hurst Middle School Green team recycle cardboard as part of their overall recycling efforts.

Another focus of the team is to promote local awareness of recycling within the community. Their partner, Phoenix Recycling, offers curbside recycling to the New Orleans region; including Destrehan. When someone signs up for service and mentions Hurst as a referral, Phoenix will contribute \$5 toward Hurst's future recycling costs.

"It has challenged me to recycle at home," said Mrs. Rexford. "We have reduced by half the amount of regular waste that we put out in a normal week. Imagine if every household did this. Think of the amount of landfill space that would be saved."

"Recycling is a necessity that everyone needs to take advantage of," said Collin Duffel, an 8th grade student at Harry Hurst Middle School.